

# OnLocation

By Brooke Comer

## NEW ENGLAND It's Happening

**NEW ENGLAND!** Just the name conjures the anticipation of Cape Cod, the magnificence of leaves changing color in the fall, historical architecture, Ivy League schools, summer stock, literature. In short, all the elements of a picture perfect set for filming. The New England region, from Maine to Massachusetts say, "It's happening."

Rhode Island now has a tax incentive to rival Louisiana; Massachusetts is looking forward to the passage of incentives by the end of this year. Connecticut is having a feasibility study done on the tax incentive plan. Maine is doing well with a creative incentive package and they are working on another incentive to become more competitive. Vermont may not have tax incentives, but does have **Edgewood Studios** for productions made in Vermont. New Hampshire believes it doesn't need a tax incentive because its incentives are built into New Hampshire's economy with no sales tax and no personal income tax. It's all *Yankee* ingenuity and it ends up as film production.

### MAINE

Greg Gadberry, Assistant Director of the Maine Film Commission, comments, "While the feature market did pick up a bit after a slow spring, we enjoyed a surge of calls in the summer for a number of other projects including TV and commercials." He continues, "We hosted a live three day show by QTN (Queer Television Network) on the waterfront in Portland. The new network, aimed at Gay and Lesbian viewers, had a great shoot and was very happy with both the location and the Maine crew." Gadberry adds, "We

are also expecting the TLC home improvement show "Trading Spaces" to return to southern Maine soon. The show shot here several years ago."

"Maine's indie scene," reports Gadberry, "has been flourishing as we see more and more locally produced features. Maine filmmakers are developing new ways to raise money locally and find new venues for showing their work. This is helping us put a spotlight on our homegrown industry, which also helps Mainers understand that production is a growing, viable and valuable industry."

Gadberry adds, "Not only does Maine have a vibrant International Film Festival, the **28th Annual Maine Student Film and Video Festival** was held in conjunction with MIFF this past July. Recognizing that young filmmakers and film lovers represent the future of cinema, the **Maine International Film Festival** continues to explore ways to involve youth in the festival program, both as presenters and audience members. Gadberry mentions 'Make It Funky' and 'Peace One Day' as two examples of films made by youth. Gadberry continues, "These are films that feature youth in the stories or have been identified as films that will hold the attention of a young audience." Gadberry reports, "In addition to these long standing festivals, in late September of this year, Camden scheduled its first, and Maine's, International documentary film festival, which was Maine's first International documentary film festival".

Gadberry emphasizes, "Members of Maine's production community are used to working in all areas of media production. It's not uncommon for Maine production folks to work one week on a feature, the next week on a



TV show or photo shoot. This multi-tasking not only benefits our

Production community, but also enriches the experience of the crew."

"Maine," says Gadberry, "is fortunate to have so much natural beauty with the seashore, the harbors, lighthouses, parks and wild lands, scenic roads, the mountains, woods and classic small town Victorian looks. This vast array of locations allow our state to double for almost anywhere from South Carolina to the west coast of Ireland."

Gadberry points out, "Our biggest production challenge is incentives. While we have a creative incentive package, we are working to pass an additional incentive which should keep us competitive in the industry."

"With striking locations, film friendly residents and easy access to major cities, such as Boston and New York," says Gadberry, "producers have wide and varied choices for filming in Maine."

## VERMONT

Tammie Blockburger, Deputy Director of Vermont Film Commission, reports, "Production in 2005 has included indie features and shorts, documentaries, commercials, catalog and still shoots as well as television specials, episodes and segments." She points out, "Companies which have produced media include: *Citizens Bank*, *Ben & Jerry's*, *Blue Cross-Blue Shield*, *Lexus* and *Snickers*. Networks filming were: *A&E*, *Discovery*, *Travel Channel*, *HGTV*, *BBC London* and *BBC US*." Blockburger continues, "Several Documentaries and television segments based around Vermont's writing community have filmed in Vermont: the 'Today Show' on *NBC* featuring author John Irving (*The World According to Garp*, *The Cider House Rules*) and *Lifetime Network* featuring author Chris Bohjalian (*Water Witches*, *The Buffalo Soldier*).

"Vermont's indie scene," says Blockburger, "is alive and well with an emergence of homegrown filmmakers as well as an influx of production crew personnel. Vermont's filmmaking community is currently quite diverse while Vermont colleges are developing or already have popular film and television production programs, which will enhance the diversity."

Blockburger adds, "Recently, Central Vermont's Edgewood Studios, located in Rutland, filmed 'Illegal Aliens,' a sci-fi comedy, directed by David Giancola and **Kingdom County Productions** in St. Johnsbury filmed their latest feature, *Disappearances*, directed by Jay Craven and starring Kris Kristofferson. The film is the third in a trilogy of films based on the novels of Howard Frank Mosher."

"The Vermont legislature," points out Blockburger, "has established a *Film Assistance Plan* which provides guaranteed loans for independent film productions. The loan guarantee program is administered through the Vermont Economic Development Authority and is designed to assist independent filmmaking in Vermont." She adds, "In addition, Vermont's support services are diverse and provide services to all types of industries from corporate services to tourism to the film and television industry."

"Vermont," says Blockburger, "has doubled for Ireland, The United Kingdom, France, Switzerland, Canada, Eastern Europe (Slovakia and Romania) and South Eastern U.S. with its colonial style architecture, orchards, plantations and estates." She continues, "In addition, Vermont has a surprising abundance of historical architecture and period locations, including whole towns that are historically accurate and look almost the same as they did when they were founded in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Authentic historical period locations can be found in all areas of the state, many of which have yet to be tapped by the TV or motion picture industry."

Blockburger would like producers to know, "While Vermont is a small state, being small proves to be an advantage, allowing production problems to be tackled simply and easily." She continues, "Since we do not have statewide permitting requirements, production clearance is completed on a local level, simplifying the procedure." Blockburger adds, "Vermont Film Commission was created to promote Vermont as a location for all types of film production and we enjoy exceptional support from government and private businesses that recognize how media production in our state serves to develop our economy in ways consistent with Vermont's commitment to environmental quality, growth

regulation and natural resource management. There are abundant film-friendly accommodations with all the charm one expects in the New England atmosphere of beautiful Vermont." Blockburger concludes, "While Vermont's tax incentives are competitive with other states, we continue to explore additional incentives. So come, 'Make it in Vermont.'"

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

Matthew W. Newton, Film Specialist for the **New Hampshire Film & Television Office**, reports, "Production, overall, has been fairly steady. While we haven't had the large, Hollywood feature films, smaller television shoots, along with regional spots and independent films have been our bread-and-butter." Newton continues, "We're a small state and haven't seen the same influx of major studio pictures as Louisiana or North Carolina has in the past. Our inquiries from the East Coast independent scene (New York, Boston, and Philadelphia) are on the rise. As a result, we have begun to rethink our marketing strategy. The Hollywood scene alone isn't the best approach. Smaller independents, which are our audience, are continuously showing interest in New Hampshire. Surprisingly, we're also beginning to see a spike in location inquiries from Toronto and Montreal, as well."

"Lately," points out Newton, "we've had a number of television projects for *Home & Garden Television*, *Discovery Health*, and *The Food Network*. We've also played host, most recently, to *The Brotherhood of Poland*, *New Hampshire*, Vincent Gallo's *The Brown Bunny* and the soon-to-be-released, *Live Free or Die* from former writers Gregg Kavet and Andy Robin (Seinfeld)." Newton says emphatically, "New Hampshire's own have also been kicking up the independent scene a notch, including Bill Millios' *Dangerous Crosswinds*, Kristen Vermilyea's *Straight Forward*, and *Sensation of Sight* from Aaron Weiderspahn and Buzz McLaughlin, starring David Strathairn, shot in October." He adds, "In addition, we've seen several documentaries for Japanese television come through New Hampshire, recently."

Newton points out, "Our unique topography and unspoiled landscapes offer plenty of diversity. English countryside sits nestled at the base of majestic mountains. Cascading rivers, the ice-whipped Arctic tundra and dramatic coastline are easy drives away. You'll also find settings from 16th-century Europe to Norman Rockwell's small-town America." He sums up, "We've got all that makes new England famous: towering granite mountain ranges, pristine lakes, breathtaking foliage, historic mills, white steepled town squares, rolling farmland, and quaint fishing villages."

"In terms of incentives," explains Newton, "this is an interesting time for filmmakers as film offices around the nation are taking a closer look at their incentives and benefits. While many states are implementing new production rebates, credits and exemptions on taxes, New Hampshire is unique: we do not need new tax breaks. All of the incentives are built right into New Hampshire's economy. New Hampshire has no sales tax or

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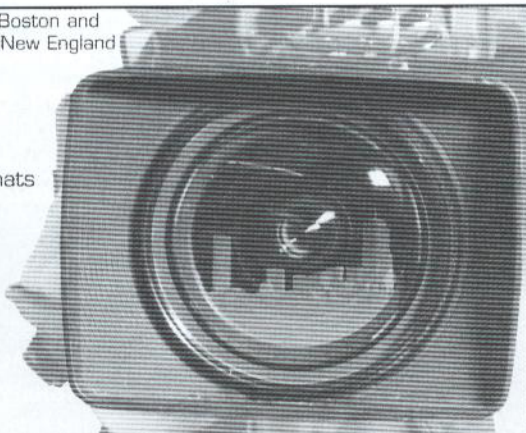
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personal income tax. However, we're finding that simply saying we have no sales or personal income tax isn't enough. A closer comparison needs to be made. As states are giving 10, 15, or even 20 percent of taxes back to the filmmaker, we're working to get the message out that New Hampshire returns 100% of those taxes to the production. Only in New Hampshire there is no need to spend the money first and wait to save later. The minute you start rolling your cameras in New Hampshire, you save."

Newton points out, "New Hampshire also has no general filming permits. There's no need for a production to register as a certified business or fill out stacks of paperwork to take advantage of what New Hampshire has to offer. What's more, there's no catch. Filmmakers do not need to spend 'X' number of dollars or shoot 'X' number of days in New Hampshire to benefit from our automatic incentives. Substantial budget or ultra low budget, all productions will save without having to meet any requirements."

"The number of independent productions along the East Coast looking to shoot in New Hampshire," says Newton, "is growing dramatically. We've learned from talking with the productions that the cause is two-fold. First, independent films are taking an interest in New Hampshire's incentives and benefits that had gone unnoticed. Secondly, filmmakers are attracted to the 'quality of life' of New Hampshire. There's been a movement recently by filmmakers who are interested in, not only shooting their project here, but also wanting to relocate both business and residence in New Hampshire."

Newton advises producers, "Take a closer look at the economic benefits of shooting in New Hampshire. Our absence of personal income and sales taxes, proximity to New York and Boston, along with rich, diverse locations makes New Hampshire a prime location. Simply put, producers are going to love it here."

## MASSACHUSETTS

"Three years ago," explains Robin Dawson, Executive Director of the **Massachusetts Film Bureau**, "funding was cut for the Film Bureau and it was closed down, which was detrimental for our industry locally." Dawson continues, "Fortunately, with hard work and fund-raising we were able to continue as a non-profit and exist today as a two-person office, Assistant Director Laura Yellin and myself." She adds, "There have been changes since that time in the thinking of the legislation and we are close to getting passage of a tax incentive which will make Massachusetts more competitive."

"Meanwhile," comments Dawson, "we hired a law firm which did research on the tax incentive legislation and aspects of the profit and loss of business."

Dawson points out, "When Matt Damon and Leonardo Di Caprio were in Boston to film *The Departed*, they visited the Massachusetts House of Representatives to make a case for the passage of tax incentive legislation, which had been filed in the summer of 2004. Matt came both as an actor and a resident of Boston to make the plea, accompanied by Leonardo and the head of production at Warner Brothers." She adds, "In addition we had the support of writer/director Peter Farrelly, as well as Ward Emling, Film Commissioner of Mississippi, who understands what a sound business venture film production can be to a community."

"Though it has taken time to educate the legislators about the economic benefits of the film industry for the state," comments Dawson, "individual legislators have been extremely helpful when contacted regarding a problem relating to film production." She continues, "Parking space was needed for *The Departed*'s large trucks; I went to John Hart of the district's Senate and he

arranged for free parking at the state convention center, just five minutes from the city. There was a flower show utilizing the center at the time, but there was still ample parking with exits to spare the trucks going in and out of the usual entry gates."

Dawson points out, "Producers should know that in addition to supportive local

Legislators, there is free usage of former state armories which have been shut down. These large armory buildings are ideal for set construction." She explains, "The Weymouth Naval Station, just 20 minutes south of Boston, has a huge hanger just right for sound stages. Producer Jeff Stott has made use of the facility, which is within the Union Zone and contains housing as well."

"Martin Scorsese's *The Departed* shot through the summer, left for filming in New York City, then returned to wrap in Boston," points out Dawson, adding, "In addition to the feature, there were commercials, TV (*Three Wishes* from NBC) and a number of Reality TV episodes. Our recent filmography includes: *Mona Lisa Smile* with Julia Roberts; *Stuck on You*, with Renee Zellweger and Jim Carey; *Spartan*, David Manet's film with Val Kilmer; Clint Eastwood's star power cast of *Mystic River*, which made a significant difference to the community in terms of recognition of locations."

Dawson says with pride, "In terms of location, Massachusetts in general and Boston in particular are hard to beat. When Scorsese lensed *The Departed*, he looked for ethnic neighborhoods and used South Boston, which was the scene of another Matt Damon film, the Academy Award Winning, *Good Will Hunting*." She continues, "Massachusetts has unparalleled locations with four centuries of history and architecture. We have every example of topography except a desert. The Bay State offers coastline villages, industrial areas, farmlands, great rivers like the Charles, an enviable range of campus looks, locales with

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names of international cache, as in Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard.

She continues, "We have experienced crew, about two and a half to three productions deep - our talent is second-to-none. Clint Eastwood used local SAG actors in *Mystic River*. Teamster Unions are aware of making acceptable contacts to attract and keep production coming to the area.

Dawson points out, "The **Boston Film Festival** just concluded another great year while **The Nantucket Film Festival** has gained popularity. Focusing on the screenwriter, NBC honors Hollywood's most accomplished screenwriters at a screenwriting tribute each year. Other notable film festivals include the **Northampton Film Festival**, the **Provincetown Film Festival**, the **Williamstown Film Festival**, the **Woods Hole Film Festival** and the **Roxbury Film Festival**. All receive international press and draw high profile actors and filmmakers which, in turn, translates into a great marketing opportunity."

Dawson concludes, "What might eventually develop for our film bureau is a film commission which is a public/private enterprise in the manner of Minnesota's film commission. Meanwhile, we will remain pro-active, stay in the eye of the media and maintain ongoing dialogue. The Film Bureau has done well under difficult circumstances and we are very optimistic about the future of film production in Massachusetts."

## NANTASKET

Bernard Kansky, founder of the **Hull Film Commission**, reports, "Nantasket Beach and Hull in Massachusetts are continuing to upgrade the area for prime film venues." He says, "Currently there has been a lot of activity for TV shows with work for a children's TV show."

"Singer Ashley shot a music video in the town hall," says Kansky, "and there was a national Toyota commercial, which shot for several days." He explains, "The shoot provided the Hull an opportunity to demonstrate how it accommodates the industry. It was summer recess and facilities of the local high school were made available to the production company. Trucks and RVs were able to park with no hassle. The school's restrooms and cafeteria were also available."

Kansky points out, "Support services are easily obtainable in this town of talented people or in Quincy, Weymouth or Boston. Hull is a very accessible twenty minute ride from Boston or Newton."

"More year-round, affluent people are making their homes in Hull," reports Kansky, "which keeps the town looking well kept with property being restored, replaced and rebuilt, making it attractive for still shoots, particularly in the boardwalk area." Kansky adds, "There are new docks and updated facilities and a fine new hotel, the **Clarion Nantasket Beach Hotel**, right on the water. The Clarion hosts many weddings directly on the beach."

Kansky explains, "Being on a peninsula offers a sense of privacy for production companies along with film-friendly residents. There are beautiful is-

lands. One, in particular, is very quaint and easily accessible by a small power boat which overlooks the bay."

## CONNECTICUT

Ellen Woolf, Project Manager of the **Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, Film Division**, speaks with enthusiasm for all the production activities. She reports, "We have had feature films, independent films, TV, Reality TV and high profile commercials, all of which have made a significant impact on the economic factor of our state."

"Farmington had Reality TV with *Nick at Nite's Road Crew*, tubing down the Farmington River," continues Woolf, "plus a new episode of *Trading Spouses*. Morning rush hour in Stamford made way for a speeding Acura with film crew, and camera car mounted with techno-crane, in tow. Later in the day the Acura car commercial was off to New Canaan for more of the same."

Woolf quotes Director Tim Hope, "Everyone couldn't have been more friendly."

"Hope," says Woolf, "liked the clean modern look of downtown Stamford and found the country road in New Canaan perfect." She adds, "Larry Horodner, **Park Pictures, LLC's** location manager reported that the company had an excellent experience filming in the state and the same could be said for the Robert De Niro directed movie, *The Good Shepherd* with Angelina Jolie and Matt Damon, filmed partially in Greenwich."

"For his suspense movie *Person of Interest*," continues Woolf, "Emmy award-winning writer/director Chris Ward found readily available resources within Connecticut's rich diversity of locations, accomplished crews and gifted talent pool. On the CCT Film Division's recommendations, the **Naugatuck Railway Museum** served as a picturesque setting for the murder mystery's opening scenes, while the New Milford quarry hosted a pivotal moment in which a missing person's body is pulled from the river. Additional scenes were filmed in Stamford, Norwalk and Greenwich, in and around New London."

Woolf adds "Another satisfied director is Connecticut resident Nick Checker of **Nightshade Productions**, who used a mostly local cast and crew for

his short docudrama, *Trashed*, which he hopes to debut at film festivals and **Niantic Cinemas**."

"*The Big Bad Swim*," reports Woolf, "had nearly 3 weeks of production in Eastern Connecticut. The ensemble comedy/drama starring Jeff Branson from *All My Children* included locations at **Connecticut College**, Mohegan Sun, Lyme, Old Lyme High School and Old Lyme home of director Schecter's parents. Schecter and Setton plan to submit this film to the Sundance Film Festival."

Woolf reports, "Shot entirely in HD, *Film-CAMP: Reel 1. The Beast Is out of the Can!* was filmed in New Canaan, Norwalk, and Stamford and included the historic **Avon Theatre Film Center** and the **Roger Sherman Inn**. The feature length comedy was a collaborative effort by New Canaan based screenwriter, Joanne Powell and Stratford director Garret C. Maynard."

"As a location manager and photographer," reports Woolf, "I have seen all the marvelous diversity this state has to offer from the beauty of its topography, the range of architecture and the colonial American towns to modern cities, the incomparable shore, the woods, the hills and its proximity to New York City. In fact, it's the closest of the New England states to the Big Apple."

From the Film Division of the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, Film Fellow Heidi Hamilton reports, "The State of Connecticut has no tax incentives at this time; however, an economic study has been commissioned with the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis of the University of Connecticut. This will be an extensive analysis of the economic impact of film [and media] production to determine the feasibility of a tax incentive. Results are expected in December 2005."

  
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With the flurry of production activity, it is expected that the study will reveal a positive impact on Connecticut's economy.

## NEW MILFORD

Keli Solomon of the **New Milford Film Commission** gives this update: "There has been a steady stream of production work including films and commercials. *Hamilton Watch* commercial was here and there were two independent films. The indie film scene is growing in this area."

"Location venues in New Milford are unique, even for New England," reports Solomon, "We have an authentic Town Green, the longest in Connecticut, with an old bandstand, surrounded by period homes. The town is only 90 miles from Times Square NYC and stands at one of the highest points in Connecticut. There are two turn-of-the-century steel bridges in picturesque settings, beaches and access to the largest man-made lake east of the Mississippi. New Milford has a vintage railroad station along with track and a private airport with gliders and small craft and multiple access to the Housatonic River."

Solomon adds, "New Milford doubles for almost any rural environment anywhere with farms and lakes and is an easy commute from New York City." She continues, "Some of the production challenges have been driving cars off cliffs, dead bodies in a quarry and managing crowd control."

"Producers," says Solomon, "should know that in addition to the natural beauty of the area, there is no permit fee and an active and an enthusiastic Historical Society is always pleased to help with research. The Film Commission is also eager to serve any of the needs of production in terms of hospitality services, location scouting, crewing and catering."

## RHODE ISLAND

Steven Feinberg, Director of the **Rhode Island Film and Television Office**, still speaks with enthusiasm about the changes that have come about in the time of his tenure, "Currently, we have a new TV series from *Showtime* filming entirely in Rhode Island. The series, tentatively titled *Brotherhood*, was created by Blake Masters and executive produced by Blake and Elizabeth Stephen of Mandalay Entertainment and Phillip Noyce, acclaimed director of 'The Quiet American.' The pilot shot in Rhode Island September to November 2004." He adds, "The series was picked up and filming began July 6 and continued until November 8th. Showtime added 11 episodes in addition to the pilot."

"Cumberland brothers, Peter and Bobby Farrelly," points out Feinberg, "who worked together on the successful *There's Something About Mary* and *Dumb and Dumber* will begin their next project, a current rendering of *The Three Stooges* here in Rhode Island. An important factor to note is the Farrelly brothers were encouraged by their studio to take the tax incentive offered in Louisiana, but when they learned of the passage of our tax incentive, they did commit to shooting

locally." Feinberg knows the tax incentive, which passed in the House 62-3 and was unanimous in the Senate 31-0, is working. He comments, "At this time there are several productions poised to shoot in our state: *Warner Bros.*, *20th Century Fox*, *Disney*, *HBO* and *Dreamworks*."

"Producers," says Feinberg, "should know that we have the most aggressive tax incentive program in the country next to Louisiana. This tax credit is transferable and is for 25% of all Rhode Island spending. There are no caps, even on salaries, and we offer an investment tax credit for Rhode Island tax payers interested in investing in a local production. That credit is not transferable, but the base budget is \$300,000 for both."

Feinberg points out, "Rhode Island is unique with a great backlot of fabled mansions, cobblestone streets, farmland, unique architecture, the shoreline, the campus of Yale University." He adds, "Because Rhode Island is the smallest state in the union, moves on this superb backlot don't cost. If a crew needs to move from one Rhode Island location to another, that's not a problem and the move will take about 10 minutes. Someone once said, rush hour traffic in Rhode Island only takes eight minutes. We are a film friendly state filled with many talented artists who are ready and able to assist a production".

"The backstory to the revival of this office," recounts Feinberg, "is that it was slated to be shut down. The state Economic Development Corporation was preparing to pull the plug when the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts stepped in to keep it going. That's where I came in, direct from two decades in Hollywood. For the first year, the office was myself and two volunteers with a budget of \$10,000." Feinberg explains, "It's my hope that the office will grow with two or three more employees and a budget of about \$600,000 to help compete with some of the more established operations in other states." He continues, "Five years from now, I envision developing an entertainment center with multiple sound stages, development offices for producers and writers, production offices and post-production facilities. This office will help with casting actors, providing production expertise such as lighting and sound and animation." ●

## CONTACT LIST

### Maine Film Commission

[www.filminmaine.com](http://www.filminmaine.com)

### New Hampshire Film and Television Office

[www.filmmnh.org/](http://www.filmmnh.org/)

### Vermont Film Commission

[www.vermontfilm.com](http://www.vermontfilm.com)

### Massachusetts Film Bureau

[www.massfilmbureau.com](http://www.massfilmbureau.com)

### Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, Film Division

[www.ctfilm.com](http://www.ctfilm.com)

### Rhode Island Film and Television

[www.rifilm.com](http://www.rifilm.com)

### Nantasket Beach Film Commission

617-227-2020

### New Milford Film Commission

[www.filmnewmilfordct.org/](http://www.filmnewmilfordct.org/)

## SERVING UP SUPPORT IN NEW ENGLAND

BY BROOKE COMER

*As the New England States continue to experience Production Growth, the crew base and support services keep getting bigger and better. Below is a list of a few companies that are helping to make the region a hot spot for film and video production.*

### Boston Camera

"Locally," says Ben Woodward, Office Manager of the **Boston Camera Company**, "there have been many commercials shot in the summer, everything from *Visa* to *Pepsi* to *Dunkin' Donuts* to *Powerball* has come through." Woodward continues, "Quite a bit of the jobs have involved the New England Patriots. In addition, the Martin Scorsese feature *The Departed* has been in town to shoot segments and the television series *Firehouse* was shooting in Boston."

Woodward reports, "Recently, we have sent out packages for many of the above mentioned commercials and just completed equipment rentals for a concert DVD for the Pixies (**Reverse Angle Productions**) as well as a music video for country singer Blake Shelton (**Taillight TV**). *American Chopper* TV series is supplied with our equipment. Quite a bit of the local scenes in this summer's film *Fever Pitch* was also shot with our cameras." Woodward adds, "Over the course of the year, we have supplied gear to numerous independent and low-budget films."

"We have been in business for over 23 years," explains Woodward, "and we think producers should know Boston Camera Rental Company is the only rental house in New England which specializes in both film and video gear. We supply the region with quality **Arriflex** and **Moviemax** 35mm and 16mm camera equipment as well and both **Panasonic** and **Sony** HD and DV gear and have full-time technicians to maintain the gear to its highest quality."

### Edgewood Studios

Mary Beth French, of Edgewood Studios, explains, "Director Dave Giancolo grew up in Central Vermont and wanted to work in his native state and be with his family. He made that dream come true co-founding The Edgewood Studios. With 40,000 square feet of space, Giancolo shoots on film while post-production is done in high tech."

"Giancolo," she continues, "lensed a recent independent film, *Ice Queen*, a sci-fi horror film, obviously shot in winter." She adds, "In fact, filming in Vermont is based on weather, when interior shots are usually done in winter."

"In addition to the *Ice Queen*," reports French, "a disaster movie, *Landslide* was well received locally, with many of the film extras used from the area." She continues, "The latest sci-fi for Giancolo is a spoof on *Charlie's Angels* meets *Men in Black*. The movie, *Illegal Aliens*, will feature Anna Nicole Smith, Traci Bingham (*Baywatch*) Chynna Laurer (WWE) and Lenise Soren."

French explains, "All of the films, independent and studio, short and feature length, are contrib-



uting to the growth of an experienced crew base and fostering good relations with key distributors who work well with Giancolo's film genre for domestic and international distribution. There is no pre-selling."

"Edgewood Studios," reports French, "now handles million dollar plus feature films, facility and equipment rentals for production groups working in Vermont, and a variety of independent features, many of which serve as training vehicles for the next generation of filmmakers."

### CrewStar

Joe Maiella, Senior Vice President of **CrewStar**, believes, "Massachusetts is at an exciting crossroad in terms of its future as a production venue, and we're doing everything possible to be sure that we take the right path." He continues, "Toward that end, a prestigious group of production companies, talent agencies, union representatives of talent and crew formed the Massachusetts Production Coalition (MPC) earlier this year. Currently I am serving as President of the Coalition." Maiella explains, "The MPC has quickly grown to be an effective alliance of many of the area's leading production professionals and related groups that are actively engaged in making media in Massachusetts, from independent documentary production to feature films, commercial production and new media." He says, "The mission of this volunteer-driven coalition is to help maintain, promote, increase and expedite the development, creation and production of film, video and new media content in the city of Boston and the State of Massachusetts."

Maiella continues, "MPC's most recent activities have centered on working with state representatives to pass tax incentive legislation which is aimed not only to attract feature and independent films, but also to encourage local commercial production viewed by many as the backbone of production activity, jobs, and expenditures in the Commonwealth."

"House #4252, The O'Brien Bill," points out Maiella, "is a comprehensive bill that will position Massachusetts within the top 5 states when comparing potential value to filmmakers and others wanting to take advantage of the tax incentives. With this bill in place, Massachusetts expects to match, or exceed, the increases in production volume documented in other states like Louisiana and New York."

Maiella reports, "The current TV project is *Brotherhood*, a *Showtime* series shooting in Providence, RI. Feature films include *The Departed*, produced by **Warner Brothers**, directed by Martin Scorsese. Shot in Boston and NY, the film stars Jack Nicholson, Matt Damon and Leonardo DiCaprio. *Black Irish*, produced by **Moody Street Pictures** and shot in Boston, is another feature along with *Disappearances*, also produced by **Moody Street Pictures** and shot in Vermont."

"Recent commercials," says Maiella, "include spots for *VISA*, *Marshalls*, *Dunkin' Donuts*, *Barbie*, *Diet Pepsi*, *Brooks*, *Bud light*, and *Papa Ginos*. Don Packer of the newly formed company, **The Engine Room**, who works in both features and commercials, recently completed a trailer for the new film *Missing in America*. **The National**

**Ministry of Design**, the motion graphics design division of **National Boston** has recently completed upgrades to their opening animation for *Extreme Makeover - the Home Edition*. UPN called upon the group to design an award winning opening for their reality series, *Britney and Kevin: Chaotic*, starring Britney Spears and Kevin Federline. *Voom*, *Animal Planet* and *Discovery's HD Theatre* networks have all recently challenged National Ministry of Design's talents to produce dual-design for promotional spots for the *NFL*, *HD theatre* and *HD by Request*, creating screen animations that will successfully work for both standard and high definition television."

Maiella continues, "National Boston's editorial and telecine groups have recently completed spots for local agencies, cutting spots for *Wrangler*, *Marshalls*, *CVS* and *Volkswagen*. Adam Payne, National Boston's Smoke Artist, has completed putting together a Jimi Hendrix DVD for national distribution. National Boston will be hosting an Art Show in early October featuring the work of David Carson along with Carson himself, who, according to *Newsweek Magazine* declared "changed the public face of graphic design."

"Meanwhile," says Maiella, "CrewStar provides payroll and booking services to clients within all of the sectors. Most recently, we have payrollled union crews who have worked for **Parallax Productions** on a spot for the *Hearts on Fire Diamond Company* that is scheduled to air this fall, as well as a PSA called *Lauren's Story* that explains the dangers of opioid prescription pain medications. In recent weeks, another CrewStar client, **High Output**, has provided lighting and grip equipment for several national spots lensed in the Boston area, including a *VISA* national spot starring Tom Brady and other Patriots players, filmed for two days at Charles River Studios using equipment provided by High Output. The production company was **Hungry Man** out of NY."

"Santa Monica, CA production company **Tool of North America** tapped High Output for a multi-day shoot for *Pepsi* at Foxboro Stadium (home of the New England Patriots). High Output continued to provide equipment to *The Departed*."

"CrewStar," explains Maiella, "deals with clients who range from large corporate media centers with comprehensive, international crew resourcing needs, to commercial production companies and independent producers looking to formalize their project labor employment practices."

Maiella sums up, "The bottom line is that Boston is working and that keeps others in the entertainment industry working."

### Sonalysts Studio

"At Sonalysts," reports Fred Litty, "we're trying to position ourselves at the intersection of media and technology, teaming our engineers and software developers with our video producers, directors and editors to provide sophisticated media products." Litty continues, "A recent example is a spot we did together with the New Haven office of advertising agency **Mason, Inc.** for the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) team, the Connecticut Sun. This was a virtual set production shot in our 7,000 square foot stage in high def against a blue cyc. Our animation team

created a four-foot high, 3D model of the Connecticut Sun logo in **Maya**. Using an HD *Ultimate* and proprietary software from **Vizrt**, we cooped the virtual logo with the players on the stage in real time so it appeared that they were dribbling, shooting and passing on top of the Sun logo."

Litty explains, "We were introduced to virtual set production techniques about two years ago by Douglas Trumbull, who lives nearby in Massachusetts, who pioneered virtual set production in his western Massachusetts studio. It has proven to be an ideal initiative to bring together our facilities, production personnel, technical specialists and animators. Today we've dedicated one of our three sound stages to maintain a standing virtual set production capability, with a digitally encoded crane, remote head, calibrated HD camera, along with composition hardware and software, ready to go."

"Earlier this year," comments Litty, "we worked on a *Verizon* commercial spot that exemplified where we were trying to go with this. The producer showed up with a virtual model and the talent in the afternoon. We calibrated the model into our equipment on the set, and then shot the scenes, compositing the actors into a variety of virtual sets in real time. The entire process only took a few hours."

Litty states, "We've recently done a couple of music videos for country singer Billy Gilman for the first two singles on his latest album *Everything and More*. We have also produced a music video for the artist Naree, which was a combination of live action and traditional Japanese-style animation."

"Our animators and game developers," continues Litty, "have recently completed their fourth PC simulation game titled *Dangerous Waters* which is available over the Internet. The game will be translated into six languages and distributed by **Strategy First, Inc.**" Litty notes, "Independent producer/director Randall Dotin recently shot the subway scene from his indie film *Lifted* in our 15,000 square foot stage and our behind-the-scenes documentary, *Billy Gilman: Making of the Video*, recently won the *Viewer's Choice Award* at the 2005 Rhode Island Film Festival." Litty concludes, "It's been a busy, productive year and we are optimistic that the pace will continue."

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